

# Salt River Fire Department Operating Guidelines

## Driver Safety

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It is the responsibility of the driver of each fire department vehicle to drive safely and prudently at all times. Vehicles shall be operated in compliance with the Arizona Motor Vehicle Code. This code provides specific legal exceptions to regular traffic regulations, which apply to fire department vehicles, **only when responding to an emergency incident or when transporting a patient to a medical facility. Emergency response (Code 3) does not absolve the driver of any responsibility to drive with due caution. The driver of the emergency vehicle is responsible for its safe operation at all times.**

When responding Code 3, warning lights must be on and sirens must be sounded to warn drivers of other vehicles, as required by the Arizona Motor Vehicle Code.

**The use of sirens and warning lights does not automatically give the right-of-way to the emergency vehicle.**

These devices simply request the right-of-way from other drivers, based on their awareness of the emergency vehicle presence. Emergency vehicle drivers must make every possible effort to make their presence and intended actions known to other drivers, and must drive defensively to be prepared for the unexpected inappropriate actions of others.

**Fire department vehicles are authorized to exceed posted speed limits only when responding Code 3 under favorable conditions. This applies only with light traffic, good roads, good visibility and dry pavement. *Under these conditions Driver's shall drive with due regard for the safety of all persons (Reasonable and Prudent).***

**Under less than favorable conditions, the posted speed limit is the absolute maximum permissible.**

When emergency vehicles must travel in center or oncoming traffic lanes, Driver's shall drive with due regard for the safety of all persons (Reasonable and Prudent).

Intersections present the greatest potential danger to emergency vehicles. When approaching and crossing an intersection with the right-of-way, drivers shall not exceed the posted speed limit.

When emergency vehicles must use center or oncoming traffic lanes to approach controlled intersections, (traffic light or stop sign) they must come to a complete stop before proceeding through the intersection, including occasions when the emergency vehicle has green traffic lights.

When approaching a negative right-of-way intersection (red light, stop sign) the vehicle shall come to a complete stop and may proceed only when the driver can account for all oncoming traffic in all lanes yielding the right-of-way.

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Code 3 response is authorized only in conjunction with emergency incidents. Unnecessary emergency response shall be avoided. In order to avoid any unnecessary emergency response, the following rules shall apply.

- When the first unit reports on the scene with "nothing showing" or an equivalent report, any additional units shall continue Code 3, but shall not exceed the posted speed limit.
- The first arriving unit will advise additional units to respond Code 2 whenever appropriate.

## BACKING OF APPARATUS

**It shall be the policy of the Salt River Fire Department that spotters be used whenever any type of fire apparatus is to be backed up. Failure to do so will result in disciplinary action.**

Drivers shall avoid backing whenever possible: Where backing is unavoidable, spotters shall be used. If no spotter is available, the driver shall dismount and walk completely around apparatus to determine if obstructions are present before backing.

## SEATBELTS

All S.R.P.M.I.C employees are required to use seat belts at all times when operating a Community vehicle equipped with seat belts. Anyone riding as a passenger/attendant in a Community vehicle is also required to use seat belts; i.e., ambulance, engine, ladder, utility service van, staff vehicle, etc.

The Company Officer/driver of the vehicle will confirm that all personnel and riders are on-board, properly attired, with seat belts on, before the vehicle is permitted to move.

All personnel shall ride only in regular seats provided with seat belts. Riding on tailboards or other exposed positions is not permitted on any vehicle at any time.

**It shall be the policy of the Salt River Fire Department that during any emergency response, fire/rescue vehicles shall not pass other emergency vehicles.**

The unique hazards of driving on or adjacent to the fireground requires the driver to use extreme caution and to be alert and prepared to react to the unexpected.

Drivers must consider the dangers their moving vehicle poses to fireground personnel and spectators who may be preoccupied with the emergency, and may inadvertently step in front of or behind a moving vehicle.

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When stopped at the scene of an incident, vehicles should be placed to protect personnel who may be working in the street and warning lights shall be used to make approaching traffic aware of the incident.

At night, vehicle mounted floodlights and any other lighting available shall be used to illuminate the scene. All personnel working in or near traffic lanes shall wear high visibility vests.

If it is not necessary to park vehicles in or near traffic lanes, the vehicle should be pulled off the road to parking lots, curbs, etc., whenever possible.

The officer in charge or driver of the vehicle is responsible for the safety of all vehicle operations and managing compliance of this procedure.

## **EMERGENCY RESPONSE POLICY**

Salt River Fire Department vehicles shall be operated in a manner that provides for the safety of all persons and property. Safe arrival shall always have priority over unnecessary speed and reckless driving enroute to an emergency incident.

Prompt, Safe Response Shall be Attained by:

1. Leaving the station in a standard manner:
  - quickly mounting apparatus
  - all personnel on board, seated and belts on
  - station doors fully open
2. Driving defensively and professionally at reasonable speeds.
3. Knowing where we are going.
4. Using warning devices to move around traffic and to request the right-of-way in a safe and predictable manner.

## **FAST RESPONSE SHALL NOT BE ATTAINED BY:**

1. Leaving quarters before crew has mounted safely and before apparatus, doors are fully open.
2. Driving too fast for conditions.
3. Driving recklessly or without regard for safety.

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4. Taking unnecessary chances with negative right-of-way intersections.
5. Intimidating or scaring other drivers.

## EMERGENCY RESPONSE CRITERIA

1. Drive with due regard for the safety of all persons (Reasonable and Prudent).
2. Traveling in center or oncoming traffic, complete stop at all traffic lights/stop signs.
3. Posted speed limit when entering intersections with green light.
4. Complete stop at all red lights, stop signs.

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State of Arizona Title 28:

### 28-624. Authorized emergency vehicles

A. If an authorized emergency vehicle is driven in response to an emergency call, in pursuit of an actual or suspected violator of law or in response to but not on return from a fire alarm, the driver may exercise the privileges provided in this section subject to the conditions stated in this section.

B. If the driver of an authorized emergency vehicle is operating at least one lighted lamp displaying a red or red and blue light or lens visible under normal atmospheric conditions from a distance of five hundred feet to the front of the vehicle, the driver may:

1. Notwithstanding this chapter, park or stand.
2. Proceed past a red or stop signal or stop sign, but only after slowing down as necessary for safe operation.
3. Exceed the prima facie speed limits if the driver does not endanger life or property.
4. Disregard laws or rules governing the direction of movement or turning in specified directions.

C. The exemptions authorized by this section for an authorized emergency vehicle apply only if the driver of the vehicle while in motion sounds an audible signal by bell, siren or exhaust whistle as reasonably necessary and if the vehicle is equipped with at least one lighted lamp displaying a red or red and blue light or lens visible under normal atmospheric conditions from a distance of five hundred feet to the front of the vehicle, except that an authorized emergency vehicle operated as a police vehicle need not be equipped with or display a red or red and blue light or lens visible from in front of the vehicle.

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D. This section does not relieve the driver of an authorized emergency vehicle from the duty to drive with due regard for the safety of all persons and does not protect the driver from the consequences of the driver's reckless disregard for the safety of others.